

REMARKS

With the present amendment, claims 1, 15, 16, and 30 have been amended. Claims 14 and 29 have been canceled.

Applicant would like to express his appreciation to the Examiner for discussing this case with applicant's representative, Mr. Alan M. Lenkin, on July 15, 2004. As discussed during the interview, the claims have been amended to further define the membership information as corresponding to both offline and online members.

The independent claims have been amended to clarify that the search results include online members and offline members. Support for the amendment is found, *inter alia*, at page 19 , lines 24 - 27 of the specification.

It is submitted that none of the applied prior art retrieves information related to offline members. Such a feature has the advantage that a player can search for members including offline members. For example, a player can make an appointment to play a certain network game with other members (including offline members), by searching for other members who have played the network game, and by sending them an appointment message. On the other hand, when a player can only search and invite online members, the player will not have the opportunity to play against offline members because the player will not know who the offline players are, and thus cannot invite any offline members who have played the game.

Consequently, it is submitted that each of the independent claims is allowable over the applied references.

Dependent claims 2 - 13 and 17 - 28 are also believed to recite further patentable subject matter of the invention and therefore are also believed allowable over the prior art. As such, allowance of the dependent claims is deemed proper for at least the same reasons noted for the independent claims, in addition to reasons related to their own recitations. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all of the claims in the present application.

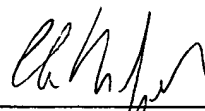
Any amendments to the claims in this amendment that have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

P23935.A06

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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